

Upstate Advocate



DRIVEN

SIX EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN LEADING THE UPSTATE
TO A GREEN, VIBRANT, AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE



ON (& OFF) THE CLOCK:

Upstate Forever staff at work and play



Thank you to our board members whose terms came to an end in 2021: Charles Dalton, Marianna Habisreutinger, Joe Lesesne, Charlie Mickel, & (pictured here with Executive Director Andrea Cooper) Pam Vaughn & Mark Taylor.



Clean Water Associate Rebecca Wade replaces livestock stakes on Brushy Creek during a stream bank restoration in Greer's Century Park.



Land Conservation's Lauren Muller & Scott Park mountain bike at Harbison State Forest after a conservation workshop in Columbia.



Protecting Land & Water | Advocacy | Balanced Growth

507 Pettigru Street, Greenville, SC 29601 | (864) 250-0500
201 E. Broad Street, Suite 1C, Spartanburg, SC 29306 | (864) 327-0090

www.upstateforever.org



Mission

Upstate Forever is a conservation organization that protects critical lands, waters, and the unique character of the Upstate of South Carolina.

Vision

To conserve our land and water resources, resulting in an environmentally healthy and economically prosperous region, with a high quality of life now and for future generations.

Board of Directors

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Michael Coleman <i>Energy Advocate</i>	Katie Hottel <i>Clean Water & GIS Manager</i>		

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Drive and determination

Real talk: on occasion, some aspects of Upstate Forever's work are a challenge. Our region is growing quickly, and time is not on our side to protect special places and implement policies for more responsible growth. But if anything, the obstacles and setbacks make our work even more important and necessary — if positive change was fast and easy all the time, everyone would be achieving it!

However, I'm happy to say that we also get to celebrate plenty of big wins! The critical nature of this work is a motivator for our staff to give it their all, every day. Last year, our Land Trust had one of their best years yet, with nearly 3,600 acres protected in permanent conservation easements.

Working with partners from across the state, our legislative team helped successfully advocate for seven bills, as well as helping nine others move forward. And we secured significant grants to help fight pollution in the Tyger and Twelve Mile watersheds.

[See pages 4-5 for more highlights from 2021.]

Upstate Forever works diligently on your behalf to represent our fragile and essential natural resources as the Upstate experiences rapid growth. But we could not do any of this work without you.

Your support is why we can protect greenspace, waterways, and iconic places. You are the reason we can advocate for smarter growth practices that reduce sprawl and lay the framework for better transit, increased walkability, and more affordable housing in our cities. With your help, we can safeguard the waterways that carry our drinking water. We are dedicated to ensuring a green and vibrant Upstate, and, thanks to your generosity, are making great progress!

Each of the six remarkable women featured in this issue of the *Upstate Advocate* has taken on a challenging issue or task related to conservation, community vibrancy, or advocacy (or all three!). They have persevered and achieved remarkable things for their communities. Their drive and determination are truly inspirational, and I hope you enjoy their stories.

Once again, thank you. You make our important work possible. All of our organization's successes are thanks to you, and they are cause for celebration.



Andrea Cooper, Executive Director



Many thanks to Fairway Subaru for supporting UF through its 2021 Subaru Share the Love event! We were blown away by the generosity of the folks at Fairway and customers who helped generate a gift of \$23,000.



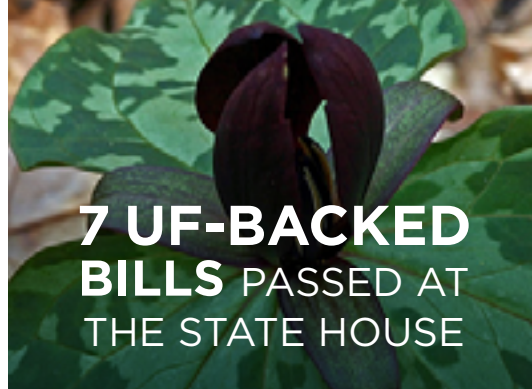
Energy Advocate Michael Coleman & State Policy Director Megan Chase crack up during a film shoot on advocacy. Check out the final videos (& the bloopers reel) on our social media channels.



Alison Miller enjoys an Allies in Ales Belgian-Style Quad Ale at a happy hour at Fireforge Crafted Beer. A portion of proceeds from sales of this brew went to UF. Thank you, Fireforge!



NEARLY
3,600 ACRES
PROTECTED



7 UF-BACKED
BILLS PASSED AT
THE STATE HOUSE



1,030 DONORS
GAVE MORE THAN
\$1.28 MILLION

Highlights & success stories from 2021

Land Conservation

UF's nationally accredited land trust **permanently protected nearly 3,600 acres** through conservation easements, as well as **900 additional acres through partnerships** with fellow conservation organizations where UF was integral to the effort's success, including:

- Spring Park Inn, a historic property in downtown Travelers Rest slated to become a park
- More than 600 acres of important forests, wetlands, and wildlife habitat in Abbeville County
- 300 acres to be added to Jones Gap State Park in northern Greenville County, thanks to the initial efforts of The Nature Conservancy
- A unique habitat in Oconee County suitable for the propagation of the rare Oconee bell plant
- 88 acres on Lawson's Fork Creek in Spartanburg, in partnership with the Tyger River Foundation
- Two amended easements adding more than 470 acres to existing protected lands in Laurens and Anderson Counties
- More than 100 acres of working farmland and vineyards in northern Greenville County

See **PAGES 20-21** for more about recent projects.

Land Stewardship staff conducted **more than 160 stewardship site visits** to UF-protected properties across the Upstate.

As the Upstate continues to grow, additional funding for conservation is more important than ever. UF led the Greenville Coalition For Greenspace in its successful effort to secure \$2 million from Greenville County Council to fund the **Historic and Natural Resources Trust**.

Through a grant from the Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative, we partnered with Clemson University and Conestee Nature Preserve to study, determine, and share best management practices to restore and improve **habitats for grassland birds**.

Clean Water

We secured funding to help landowners in the **3&20 Creek and Tyger River watersheds** improve water quality by installing projects on their properties to reduce stormwater runoff, such as septic systems, livestock fencing, riparian buffers, and conservation easements.

Our Clean Water team partnered with the City of Greer and Clemson University Extension to repair **1,000 feet of stream bank** in a popular city park.

UF partnered with ReWa on an outreach campaign to educate the public about the value of having **access to clean, reliable water**.

In partnership with the SC Rural Water Association, we worked to develop a comprehensive and targeted plan to **reduce water pollution in Lake Greenwood**, and received funding to develop a watershed-based plan for the Twelve Mile River watershed.

We are working with American Rivers, Chattooga Conservancy, American Whitewater, Naturaland Trust, and the Georgia Canoeing Association to urge Georgia Power to study the costs and benefits of removing the Tugalo Dam, which would **restore the Chattooga Gorge** and free-flowing condition of the Chattooga River.

Land Planning & Policy

UF successfully advocated, along with partners and city leadership, for **stronger tree protection and preservation** in the City of Greenville and advocated in five jurisdictions for more equitable land use **policies and plans that expand housing choices, mobility options, and green spaces while reducing sprawl** into forests and farmlands.

We **mobilized community members** through social media and emails dedicated to land policy issues in Greenville and Spartanburg and engaged 60 Greenville residents in virtual Citizens Planning Academies.

Our Land Planning & Policy team worked with partners and citizens to urge Greenville County Council to implement **policies to better manage growth**, including adoption of Rural Conservation Subdivision Guidelines, and supported the citizen-led effort to establish an Agricultural Preservation Zoning District.

In concert with Impact Greenville partners, we hosted Richard Rothstein — author of **“The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America”** — for a virtual event exploring how local, state, and federal governments deliberately imposed racial segregation throughout the 20th century on metropolitan areas nationwide and highlighted how those policies are at the root of many challenges the community faces today.

UF also moderated “Erasing the Redline: How Communities of Color are Disproportionately Exposed to Pollution and How to Fix It,” a virtual panel discussion about the **effects of pollution on communities of color**, and how to provide sustainable solutions for those communities.

Energy & State Policy

In the first year of a two-year session, UF worked with our partners at the **SC Statehouse** to successfully pass seven UF-backed bills, including a bill that makes solar energy more accessible, and one that increases infrastructure for electric vehicles. We also helped nine others move forward, and supported successful efforts to fund many conservation initiatives through the state appropriations process.

Upstate Forever and SELC proposed a new rule for the Public Service Commission that would

add a landowner “bill of rights” requirement when natural gas companies propose new pipelines and proposed regulations that dramatically **improve transparency in the pipeline construction** process.

We **added an Energy Advocate to our team** to address local and statewide energy policy issues through utility regulation and accountability and legislative action, in addition to working to address issues of energy burden and energy infrastructure concerns throughout the Upstate.

As co-chair of SC Rivers Forever, UF initiated quarterly meetings with SCDHEC to advance **improvements to water quality standards**. After two years of advocating for stronger protections for existing flows in our rivers and streams, SCDHEC has indicated they will review and revise current regulations on surface water flows and withdrawals.

After hearing about a **proposed natural gas pipeline** planned for Travelers Rest this fall, we worked with residents, advocates, and Piedmont Natural Gas to direct the line to areas with the least environmental sensitivity and impact on residents’ properties.

Finally, we urged legislators to pass a Joint Resolution to create **limits for a group of toxic “forever chemicals”** that are federally unregulated and have been found in drinking water throughout SC.

***Want more?** If you’re interested in learning more about any of these items, send us an email at info@upstateforever.org and we’ll connect you to the right staff member. We also have email lists dedicated to each of these programs at upstateforever.org/email.*

Upstate Forever’s programs are:



LAND CONSERVATION



CLEAN WATER



LAND PLANNING & POLICY



ENERGY



STATE POLICY

PROGRESS ON FIVE-YEAR* STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL: PROTECT 15,000 MORE ACRES OF CRITICAL LANDS

10,131/ 15,000

3,903 acres
in due diligence

GOAL: 10 POLICIES THAT SUPPORT ALTERNATIVES TO SPRAWL

9 / 10

GOAL: DOUBLE UPSTATE FOREVER’S BASE OF SUPPORT

63% INCREASE

*As of Dec. 31, 2021. From UF’s five-year Strategic Plan (Jan 2018 - Dec 2022)

HOW TO HELP

Support our work: Make a tax-deductible gift at upstateforever.org/donate or by mailing a check to our Greenville office.

Consider a planned gift: Find more info at upstateforever.giftlegacy.com.

Stay informed: For updates and action alerts, follow us on social media and sign up for our email lists at upstateforever.org/email.



Welcome, new board and staff members!

BOARD *For full bios, visit upstateforever.org/board.*

John Bauknight

John Bauknight is President and Co-founder of Longleaf Holdings USA, a Spartanburg-based investment firm, and Longleaf Holdings, LLC, a commercial real estate and development firm. In 2007, John and Longleaf partner Nick Wildrick acquired RJ Rockers Brewing Company of Spartanburg. Bauknight, along with founder and Brewmaster Mark Johnsen, relocated the Brewery back to downtown Spartanburg in 2009. John continues to be heavily involved in Spartanburg County's entrepreneurial community, including helping to launch the Spartanburg Angel Network in 2015.



Jeff Tillerson

A Spartanburg native, Jeff Tillerson has worked for the City of Spartanburg since 2002 in the code enforcement office. Jeff is a graduate of Leadership Spartanburg and Spartanburg County Foundation's Grassroots Leadership Institute. He joined the board of Spartanburg Area Conservancy in 2012, where he served as board secretary for many years before assuming the roles of Vice Chair in 2018 and Board Chair in 2019. He serves as Board Chair for Christmas In Action Spartanburg and Total Ministries. Jeff is also a member of the Upstate Land Conservation Fund Governance Committee.



STAFF *For full bios, visit upstateforever.org/team.*

Sean Cobourn | LAND STEWARDSHIP MANAGER

Sean comes to UF after a 30-year career as an attorney. He has served on the board of directors for advocacy climbing groups The Access Fund and the Carolina Climbers Coalition, where he spearheaded land purchases to help build Chimney Rock State Park and Laurel Knob. In his free time, Sean enjoys rock climbing, mountain biking, and caving.



Alison Miller

LAND CONSERVATION OPERATIONS ASSOCIATE

Alison comes to UF as a former paralegal and legal program coordinator. She provides process and project management support for both the Outreach and Stewardship sides of the Land Conservation team. In her free time, Alison can be found anywhere outside with her family — hiking, paddleboarding, snow skiing, or even picnicking.



Michael Coleman | ENERGY ADVOCATE

With experience ranging from political campaigns to the financial sector, Michael has used his in-depth knowledge to provide corporate leaders with advisement regarding legislation and elections. He is excited to help UF further develop its Energy program. In his free time, Michael enjoys traveling, fishing, listening to music, and time with family and friends.



Elizabeth Swails | COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Elizabeth is a 5th generation Greenville native with a PhD in English and 10+ years teaching English composition and literature. At UF, she assists with marketing, communications, and advocacy strategies and initiatives. Elizabeth enjoys going on "bug hunts" in local nature preserves with her husband and young son.



Grace Flaspoebler

ASST. DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Following her graduation from Clemson, Grace moved to Washington, D.C., where she gained experience in political fundraising, nonprofit development/management, and public administration. In her spare time, you can find Grace on the Prisma Health Swamp Rabbit Trail walking her corgi, Pawley.



Rebecca Wade | CLEAN WATER ASSOCIATE

With experience ranging from wildlife research to environmental education, Rebecca is looking forward to utilizing her knowledge to expand UF's Clean Water initiatives. In her free time, Rebecca enjoys running, biking, hiking, and backpacking. Additionally, she loves spending time with her husband and dogs at Greenville's many breweries.



Choose your own (paddling) adventure



By Katie Hottel

CLEAN WATER & GIS MANAGER
khottel@upstateforever.org

I joined Upstate Forever in 2013 and one of the first big projects I worked on was the Reconnecting People to Rivers Initiative. This years-long project involved mapping segments of Upstate rivers to provide the information you need to plan a fun river adventure.

Throughout the course of this project, I had the unique opportunity to paddle many of the Upstate’s rivers and experience the diversity of blueway recreation offered in our own backyards. The Upstate has rivers rural and urban, wide and narrow, laid back and thrilling — truly something for everyone at all skill levels.

As a beginner (read: ungraceful) paddler myself, I found many trips that fit into my skill and comfort level — and some that were not, but conquered nonetheless! If you are just getting into canoeing or kayaking, these trips were some of my favorites. I hope you find them as peaceful and exciting as I did.

If you like wildlife encounters, try the Saluda River. This river is easy-going with a hint of flair and perfect for those wanting an opportunity for wildlife viewing. My favorite trip starts at Beacham Road and ends at Souls Harbor on Lake Greenwood. You’ll encounter a few mild rapids, plenty of flat water, and plenty of wildlife.

If you crave wide open spaces (cue The Chicks song), head out to the Broad River. My husband David and I loved the Broad. It feels vast and exciting but still safe and convenient. On our trip, we paddled from the Broad River Greenway to the Big Bay River Access and didn’t see another person the whole time. We found a cool rock outcrop to enjoy our packed lunch and saw a ton of wildlife.

If you’re looking for some short-lived drama, the Pacolet River has what you want. It’s one of my favorite river adventures I’ve had in the Upstate. One year for UF’s “Staff Fun Day,” we took a guided trip down the Pacolet from Clifton Park to Goldmine Road and it was a thrilling adventure for my beginner-paddler-self. We encountered many rapids and had a great time maneuvering down the river. I’d do this trip again in a heartbeat.

If you like binge-watching 5 seasons of anything on Netflix, maybe a “park-n-paddle” is more your style. These trips don’t require any car shuffling – simply park your car and get in the water; you’ll begin and end at the same spot! Most of these trips are flat water or reservoirs, so they’re perfect for short trips, bringing kids, and minimal effort (but maximum reward!). My favorite spot is Lake Robinson. It is easy to access, has plenty of amenities, and a fantastic view.

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For interactive maps, detailed trips, and more paddling resources, visit gopaddlesc.com.



WHICH IS MORE YOUR STYLE?

DRIVEN

SIX EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN LEADING THE UPSTATE TO A GREEN, VIBRANT, AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE

Read full-length articles online at upstateforever.org/driven

DRIVEN TO CONNECT

Alix Pedraza

DIVERSITY OUTREACH MANAGER | SC DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

As a college student back home in the country of Colombia, I had the chance to visit the Amazons, and I was overwhelmed by the beauty and abundance of species there. After this experience, I made it my goal to work towards a career involved in protecting natural places.

Besides the obvious conservation attitudes and behaviors derived from nature, research also indicates that nature offers incredible health benefits, including mental health, which I personally appreciate the most. Being outdoors makes me happy and grateful about my freedom in this country and working in nature allows me to combine my love for the environment with my desire to protect it.

I graduated from Coastal Carolina University with a BA in Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation Biology, and then from Clemson University with an MS in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management. Then I had the opportunity to join SCDNR in 2015.

SCDNR has multiple initiatives across the state; for example, our Aquatic Education Program works with various Upstate schools' Trout in the Classroom Program. Sometimes we go with school groups for fish releases that take place at Table Rock. Our program has also done nature hikes around Sassafras Mountain.

In my role as Diversity Outreach Manager for SCDNR, I've seen the organization be extremely successful at dedicating and maintaining resources for underrepresented audiences.

When you are new to any type of activity, being a beginner or feeling unwelcomed can be intimidating. Similarly, not knowing or not being able to understand

the rules for accessing certain places can also be an impediment. That's why we work diligently to improve the way we engage with audiences who have not always had equitable access to nature.

Our success with Diversity Outreach is measured in several ways. In terms of numbers, we can't say we've seen a large increase in underrepresented audiences coming to our programs. But awareness and participation have definitely increased compared to six years ago.

We know larger percentages of our underserved Hispanic population live in Greenville, Oconee, and Spartanburg, but those populations do have access to and use state parks. However, there are not specific studies yet that indicate where or how we should be working to promote conservation among these groups.

In addition to our outreach efforts, we've had great conservation success in the Upstate. Jocassee Gorges is the best conservation example I can think of. There are over 30,000 acres of land protected in and around the Gorges, and multiple species of plants and animals are being protected as well. Two species that come to mind are the Oconee bell and the peregrine falcon, which was successfully reintroduced in the 1980s thanks to the abundance of protected lands in that area.

I enjoy my visits to the Upstate. I like both Sassafras Mountain and Table Rock State Park. My favorite trail in the whole state is actually the Foothills Trail; I've hiked several sections of it, and I love it. I know how hard the volunteers work to keep it always accessible and well-marked, so everyone can benefit from its beauty and restoration.



Being outdoors makes me happy and grateful about my freedom in this country, and working in nature allows me to combine my love for the environment with my desire to protect it.

— ALIX PEDRAZA



Alix Pedraza speaks to a group at Sassafras Mountain in Northern Pickens County. Alix says awareness of and participation in SCDNR's Diversity Outreach program has increased compared to six years ago.

Sandy Hanebrink

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TOUCH THE FUTURE | GREENVILLE

I was always an athlete. I grew up in Mauldin and participated in many sports from the time I was 6 years old. I went on to be a scholarship athlete at Spartanburg Methodist College and then on to the University of Florida. While at the University of Florida, I was in a car accident that set off the crazy events leading to my allergic reaction to an antibiotic that resulted in transverse myelitis and becoming a quadriplegic.

I did extensive rehab for many years. While there, I was introduced to wheelchair sports and later became a Paralympian. During these opportunities, I became engaged with many mobility companies and learned about the evolving technologies available like functional neuro-stimulation walking systems. These did not work for me, but I continued to stay actively looking for the right technology for me so that when it was available, I could use it.

I was keeping my eye on the Phoenix by SuitX. It was the lightest and least expensive to date and once I saw they had FDA approval, I contacted them. Unfortunately, like a lot of things, Covid-19 put a delay in the plan. It was quite the adventure to become the first person in South Carolina to receive this medical exoskeleton.

Last year, beginning in July, I made the journey across the country to Emeryville, California to SuitX. I couch surfed my way out, staying with friends as much as possible, and made many stops in state and national parks along the way. It was seven weeks total.

On September 21, 2021, it happened. 34 years, one month, and one day since I was paralyzed, Michael McKinley from SuitX came to SC and

delivered my Phoenix. I was walking.

Five days later, with the help of many friends, including 3 physical therapists, I walked the trail at Table Rock State Park to see the first of hopefully many waterfalls, one that I had not been able to access since my early 20s. The Phoenix allowed me to rise again and gain access to my first of many adventures. It gave me another level of freedom to do the things I love to do. A focused fundraising effort began and continues today to help me and others get these amazing technologies.

This special day also allowed me an opportunity to speak to the park ranger about the lack of access and how easily this particular trail could be accessible to all.

These treasured spaces are important for everyone but unfortunately, despite almost 60 years of laws and requirements, people with disabilities still have little access to outdoor

spaces. These requirements are often unenforced or an afterthought unless a formal complaint or lawsuit is filed. So I continue to educate and advocate to ensure these standards, regulations, and civil rights are in place.

We must ensure there is accessible parking with accessible routes to our parks and all the facilities that are in them. Detailed information about accessibility should be available in alternate formats, so those who are blind or have other disabilities can access the information as necessary. There should also be programs that include sign language interpreters — I have only seen this done well once in over 34 years of advocacy. Disability access means access for seniors and families, too.

Now, my roles as Executive Director of Touch the Future, an occupational therapist, Paralympian, advocate, disabled person, and my life before



In September 2021, Sandy walked a trail in Table Rock State Park for the first time in decades with the aid of her Phoenix medical exoskeleton. Photo courtesy of livingupstatesc.com

disability are all intertwined. They are part of who I am and have created many amazing opportunities and an expansive network that has helped create better access and independence for myself and thousands of others. I work with local landscape architects, architects, engineers, and officials to design new facilities and make changes to existing ones.

Some of these projects in the Upstate include work with City of Anderson parks and greenways; Anderson County's work on the Blue Ribbon Trail, including the first accessible kayak facility in SC at Dolly Cooper Park on the Saluda River and additional access at Timmerman Landing in Pelzer, Green Pond Landing and Event Center, and the East West Connector; Falls Park, Cancer Survivors Park, playgrounds and event centers in Mauldin, Anderson, Simpsonville, Greenville, and Spartanburg, as well as input on the Palmetto Trail, attending countless community planning events and speaking at local and county council meetings. I also serve or have served on many state and national committees and currently serve on the United Nations G3ict NeuroAbilities Advisory Committee.

I love the Upstate. I love living in the foothills, having access to so many rivers, lakes and trails — especially now with my exoskeleton — and the weather is great, too. But being a part of making this area more accessible to everyone is the icing on the cake.

Speak up. Advocate. Design accessible. Remove the barriers. The Upstate is beautiful. Let's make sure it stays that way and can forever be accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities.

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Learn more about Touch the Future by visiting touchthefuture.us.

The Upstate is beautiful. Let's make sure it stays that way and can forever be accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities.

— SANDY HANEBRINK



Sandy Hanebrink stands on Greenville's Liberty Bridge using a Phoenix, a medical exoskeleton created by SuitX that has allowed her to stand, walk, and hike again after a 1987 accident led to her paralysis. Sandy was the first person in South Carolina to receive a Phoenix.

Mercedes "Mac" Curry

FOUNDER, PAWS ANIMAL WILDLIFE SANCTUARY | LAURENS

Growing up, I always found critters who needed help. My parents sent them off to others for care, but in my 20s, I decided I should learn how to care for them myself. By the time I moved to SC in the fall of 2002, I was an experienced wildlife rehabilitator. We chose South Carolina after a series of very positive conversations with SCDNR, who assured me I could continue my work here. So, in the spring of 2003, we opened PAWS Animal Wildlife Sanctuary in Laurens County.

We searched properties for a year before finding our Sanctuary, which encompasses about 180 acres of woods and streams. I love this property. The topography is beautiful, with deep ravines and overlooks and some great flat areas where we set up our buildings and home sites. It's my personal slice of heaven that also provides home and release areas to our rehabilitated wildlife.

As a wildlife rehabilitator, I work to save, rehab, and release individual animals in need. As an educator, I help people learn species' value and how to peacefully coexist. Many human-wildlife conflicts are inadvertently caused by humans, but we can help correct these problems, even if we didn't cause them. It's the right thing to do as stewards of our planet.

Humans don't always understand the place each creature occupies in nature. Sometimes, humans label animals a 'nuisance' and kill them rather than finding ways to peacefully coexist. Sometimes, people think there are 'so many' of them that it doesn't matter.

As I often explain to callers surprised to see deer, raccoons, squirrels, skunks, opossums, and many other species living in their communities, animals do not have

the luxury of packing up and moving out to less inhabited spaces. They live or die where they are born.

While raccoons and squirrels have adapted best to urban settings, others like bats, chimney swifts, and barn owls suffer the most. We have several permanent owl residents at PAWS who came to us after incidents with humans. Our educational barred owl, Orso, has vision issues from his car collision, which prevents him from catching enough prey. And our great horned owl, Emerson, came to us after getting caught in baseball backdrop netting. She has permanent wing damage that prevents her from flying, but she loves getting thoroughly soaked during rainstorms!

If the public finds an injured wild animal, they should contact someone who has training, supplies, access to veterinary care, and can recognize life-threatening problems. While some finders recognize problems too, others think they're helping but do more harm by keeping the animal in their possession, which also breaks state and/or federal laws and risks disease and parasite transmission (rabies is actually low on the list). Another common misconception is that wild animals need food immediately, but there are several steps we take before feeding an animal, especially an emaciated one.

If someone does want to rehabilitate wildlife, the time to learn is before they have a wild animal in their possession. Otherwise, we end up with imprinted animals, like our turkey vulture, Kiki, who was improperly raised by humans and became too bonded to them. It is important to keep our vultures in the environment because they remove carcasses quickly and help prevent the spread of disease and bacteria; their digestive tract can even remove Anthrax!



I would love to see a kinder and gentler world between humans and between humans and other creatures. I'm a strong proponent for peaceful coexistence. Humans can live in the same areas as wildlife without conflict.

The public can help by understanding that wildlife needs to remain wild. It is not a good idea to attract wild animals to your yard with food, because what one resident considers lovely, another might consider a nuisance. That being said, in the heat of summer and dry spells, people can set out water bowls on the far fringes of their yards for thirsty animals.

People can also help by not littering. Many don't realize that discarding trash on the road, even if it's biodegradable, attracts small animals who come to investigate interesting odors. It doesn't take long before predators learn that trash might be hiding prey and that's when they or the prey get hit.

I think it's fitting for humans, as caretakers of the planet, to help wildlife survive in situations we create.

If you find an animal in need, please call PAWS Animal Wildlife Sanctuary at (864) 715-2171.

For more information about PAWS, visit paws-sc.com.

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Opposite page, left to right:
(1) Emerson, a great horned owl, is an educational bird who cannot be released to the wild.
(2) Mac Curry holds Lady Phaelin, an educational red tailed Hawk.
(3) A barred owl, rescued as a chick by PAWS, takes flight as it is released back into the wild.

Mac Curry with Elroy, a Black Vulture who serves as an educational animal for PAWS Animal Wildlife Sanctuary. PAWS takes live animals like Elroy to classrooms, clubs, and other groups to teach respect, tolerance, appreciation, and peaceful co-existence with the animals in our environment.



As an educator, I help people learn species' value and how to peacefully coexist. It's the right thing to do as stewards of our planet.

— MAC CURRY

Mable Owens Clarke

STEWARD & MATRIARCH OF SOAPSTONE BAPTIST CHURCH | PICKENS

I was born on Liberia Road in Pickens County, two doors down from Soapstone Baptist Church, and I grew up there. This area was first settled by Native Americans. Of course, they were run off the land and later, 600 freed slaves came to the area.

My great-great-grandfather was among those freed slaves — his name was Joseph McJunkin. He started a church there. At that time, there was no money to build a church. He cut down trees and created a brush arbor, and they would have services under it. He named it Soapstone, after the rock found across the land the church sits on. As time went on, they planted the cotton and other plants. Those 600 pooled their money together, bought lumber, and built the original Soapstone Baptist Church.

I was baptized in that church when I was ten years old. Shortly after that in 1968, it was burned down by Ku Klux Klansmen. But my parents had a big farm, and sold so many vegetables, they were able to rebuild and open the church as it stands today within one year. It was remarkable.

When the freed slaves came to Liberia in 1865, they also



Mable Owens Clarke at Soapstone Baptist Church in the Liberia Community, an enclave of African-American culture and history established in 1865 by freed slaves.

developed the slave cemetery on the property. I had heard my parents talk about it when we were younger, and us kids would ask them to take us to it. They said it was too painful. They couldn't do it. We knew it was somewhere on the six acres, but never knew where.

I had a land surveyor come out. He told me he found the graves nestled in the woods. About two weeks after that, I sent a letter to all our sister churches in the community asking for help — chainsaws, bulldozers, whatever means they had to help cut away everything that had grown up there. I said, "If you come and help me at 7:30 on Saturday morning, I'll make you one of the best lunches you've ever had."

Sure enough, I had 35 people show up that morning. They worked until 12 o'clock and still hadn't gotten to a grave. I gave them a nice lunch as I had promised. I asked if we could schedule another date to work and they insisted on going back out there. "We're going to see at least one grave before we leave today," they said.

At 3 o'clock, I heard clapping. Everyone threw down their shovels and saws and took off running. They'd found a grave!

Now the cemetery has been cleared out, and there's a cul-de-sac and beautiful entranceway and shrubbery. I just felt so compelled to give those slaves some dignity and be a voice for them.

Later, my mother became paralyzed from a stroke and I came out of work to take care of her and my dad. One particular day, I asked what she wanted for breakfast. She said, "I don't want breakfast today, but I've got two favors I need from you."

The first favor was to bring my oldest brother back to the family house. Then she asked me to take her hand — she squeezed it so tight — and said, "Do not let the doors of Soapstone Church close. Promise me you'll continue to carry out your great-great-grandfather's legacy. Continue to care for what me and your dad did to rebuild the church."

Three days later, the angels came and she left us.

People ask me how I came up with doing the monthly fish fry and stuck with it for so long. My mother's driven spirit helped me do it. I had to do it.



My mother asked me to take her hand — she squeezed it so tight — and said, “Do not let the doors of Soapstone Church close. Promise me you’ll continue to carry out your great-great-grandfather’s legacy.”

— MABLE OWENS CLARKE

Mable Owens Clarke stands on the soapstone outcropping that is the namesake of Soapstone Baptist Church, founded by her great-great grandfather Joseph McJunkin in 1865. For 22 years, Mable held monthly fish fries to help pay the church's bills. The church property will soon be preserved forever as a historic site.

I kept the promise I made to her. I started a monthly fish fry with the money raised going toward paying off the church's debts. It was 22 years into the fish fry when the bank called and said, not that we were behind or anything, but that they needed \$50,000 or we would lose the church.

Then, a few things happened. *Eating Well* magazine contacted me. They'd heard about the church and the fish fry. They wanted to send their food critic here.

Investors started contacting me then, too, offering to take me to the bank and pay the \$50,000 off. They were coming out of the woodworks. Where the church sits, there's a picturesque view of Caesars Head and Table Rock. People wanted to turn it into a neighborhood or a resort. That was when I started to get really serious about conserving this land. The more these investors would come in, the more I was driven to protect it.

The *Eating Well* feature went international, and we started getting checks from London, Belgium, all over the world. We were able to pay off the mortgage on

the church within a couple months.

Now I'm working with Upstate Forever and others on the conservation easement so Soapstone Baptist Church can and will always be a historic site, even when my time is up. I feel like Upstate Forever is my family that helped me to keep my promise to my mother.

For her tireless and quiet dedication to secure the preservation of the historic Soapstone Baptist Church, Mable Owens Clarke is the recipient of Upstate Forever's 2022 Marjorie E. Schmidt Stewardship Award. Our nationally-accredited land trust has been working with Ms. Clarke, conservation partners, and funding sources to permanently protect Soapstone and its surrounding acreage through a conservation easement, which should be finalized in 2022.

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To learn more about Soapstone Baptist Church and the community of Liberia, visit soapstonechurch.com.

Diane Gluck

FOUNDER, CANCER SURVIVORS PARK ALLIANCE | GREENVILLE

The impetus for creating a Cancer Survivors Park in Greenville came from my daughter, Kimberly. She researched and designed the original park as part of her Senior Project at Christ Church Episcopal School in 1999. Her initial plan was to create a small healing garden outside of the windows of the cancer treatment room on the Eastside campus of Cancer Centers of the Carolinas so that patients would have something beautiful to look at while undergoing treatment.

However, when her research led her to the Bloch Foundation Cancer Survivors Parks, which focused on changing beliefs about cancer and focusing on living with rather than dying from cancer, she expanded her vision. She brought together the original steering committee and created the original design and infrastructure for the project. I became the firesoul — the “push” to keep the project moving forward regardless of the obstacles. Together with several critical members of that original committee, in particular the landscape architect Tom Keith, we worked to shepherd the idea forward until it finally came to fruition almost 20 years later.

Cancer Survivors Park in Greenville was specifically designed to capitalize on several key elements thought to improve healing: the power of nature to provide respite and rejuvenation, the power of community to decrease loneliness and isolation, the power of knowledge to introduce holistic programs that complement the benefits of medical treatment, and the power of the mind to encourage everyone to see cancer or any life-threatening illness as a turning point rather than an endpoint.

I have been fortunate to be able to spend a lot of time in the park and watch as people experience its many unique spaces and find their own space to heal. I have been astounded by the numerous serendipitous occurrences — the heron swooping down low over the speaker during the opening ceremonies for the park, the turtles returning to their nest near the labyrinth right when we are walking by, or the hawk sitting atop the stone column beside the bridge for almost half an hour, totally undisturbed by the onlookers snapping photos.

The most special to me, however, have been those moments when I felt that Cancer Survivors Park had become more than just another park. The first occurred during a drumming class for cancer survivors. We were inside the Center for Hope and Healing with the sun

streaming through the windows and a focused view of the trees. People were walking and biking along the Prisma Health Swamp Rabbit Trail and glancing in to watch. At the end of the session, one of the cancer survivors commented, “I love having our classes here. I love being surrounded by nature but, even more, I love that people can look in and see us and think ‘Wow, they look normal.’”

The second experience was when I met a young father and his daughter at the park. The little girl’s mother had just passed away earlier that day, and she had asked to come to the park. The father told me that during the mother’s illness, the family had come to the park often, hoping that the girl would have a happy place that she could come to and feel her mother’s presence. That day, the little girl joyfully shared that she was happy because she was at “mommy’s park.”

Cancer impacts us all in some way and rocks our world — physically, emotionally, and socially. Despite the advances being made in treatment and survivorship, the diagnosis continues to be associated with fear and hopelessness. I have spent most of my adult life with cancer survivors, both professionally as a family therapist and personally as the wife of an oncologist and the daughter and daughter-in-law of cancer survivors. I consistently observed the role that attitudes and beliefs play in how different people deal with illness and trauma. Many survive their illness but never completely heal.

As we developed the concept for Greenville’s Cancer Survivors Park, we spent a lot of time learning about the power of place and, in particular, the advantages nature can have on the healing process. Research has clearly shown that time spent with nature can decrease stress, improve mood, and change one’s physiology in ways that enhance healing. In addition, being “in community” and interacting with others in peaceful settings is known to provide significant health benefits.

Finally, groups like NatureSacred have consistently demonstrated that when open natural settings are intentionally combined with personal stories and inspiring messaging about healing, they become sacred places that not only delight, but also transform visitors. That is what we hope we have created for anyone seeking to find peace and healing, regardless of where they are on their life’s journey.

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Learn more about the park at cancersurvivorspark.org.



Diane Gluck, founder of the Cancer Survivors Park Alliance, has spent most of her adult life with cancer survivors, both professionally as a family therapist and personally as the wife of an oncologist and the daughter and daughter-in-law of cancer survivors.

When open natural settings are intentionally combined with personal stories and inspiring messaging about healing, they become sacred places that not only delight, but also transform.

— DIANE GLUCK

Ruth Littlejohn

CITY COUNCILWOMAN | SPARTANBURG

I have many memorable experiences from growing up in Spartanburg. My neighborhood was a tight-knit community; most importantly, we knew our neighbors. Neighborhoods were like villages – if you did something you weren’t supposed to, the neighbors corrected you, and you’d better listen or else they’d tell your mother!

I remember Spartanburg being a thriving town. I enjoyed going downtown because there were so many wonderful shops. My neighbor and I would occasionally ride our bikes from the northside to the southside of town, where there were so many thriving African American businesses.

When my husband, Horace, and I married in 1975, we left Spartanburg to travel with the Air Force. He retired in 1996 as a Lt. Colonel, and we decided to return to Spartanburg in 2004. We purchased and restored an older home in the South Converse Community on the southside. When we moved back, it was like a ghost town and very depressing. Many downtown stores had moved to Westgate Mall or had gone out of business, leaving behind vacant store fronts.

After returning to Spartanburg, I was elected president of the South Converse Neighborhood Association in 2008 and began playing a role in Spartanburg’s comeback. As a child, I was taught cleanliness is next to godliness. Before school, we checked to make sure there wasn’t trash in the yard, road, or around our house. I continue to believe that if we can get children involved in cleanups, they will encourage adults and others not to litter. So I started a monthly cleanup program that continues today. Other neighborhoods have also gotten involved in cleanup initiatives, and, as a board member of Keep One Spartanburg Beautiful, I help with the cleanup throughout Spartanburg County, too.

Now, there’s much vibrancy and development in the city, with more to come. It’s encouraging to see our City, County, and OneSpartanburg working together to make this a better place for all. We have a hardworking and devoted City Team that I joined in 2018, and we’re trying to ensure everyone is included as development and business expands in the city and county.

We’ve had a great response to Spartanburg’s Comprehensive Plan with discussions focused on guaranteeing Spartanburg’s future development aligns with the City’s goal of racial and social equity. We’ve negotiated

and collaborated with developers to include affordable housing within market rate developments, and we believe this will pay dividends in our communities for years to come.

Recently, Council approved the first affordable development in our downtown footprint, creating a foundation for future development.

We also have many areas where we can better use our natural resources to serve our communities. The South Converse Street Park refurbishment, for example, provided a much-needed recreational area for children and families to enhance family togetherness, eliminate obesity, and provide space for picnics and neighborhood gatherings.

As a PAL board member, I saw the pandemic prove how important greenspaces and trails are in lowering blood pressure, stress, and cholesterol rates. Such spaces also enable friends and families to gather in a socially distanced way. I believe having more greenspaces, parks, and playgrounds benefits everyone.

My favorite outdoor spot is the Mary Black Rail Trail. I don’t believe there’s any place around that brings people together more. I enjoy seeing old classmates, church members, neighbors, and friends, and it is accessible for diverse users.

Over the years, I’ve enjoyed seeing all the development off this trail, including the Carolina Panthers Play 60, covered picnic pavilion, dog park, Vic Bailey Subaru Bike Park, and the Fretwell (a community hub now under construction). The YMCA is also located a few feet off the trail, and The Southside Cultural Monument is coming soon.

The best way people can get involved with Spartanburg’s initiative for sustainable development is to provide feedback to their council representatives about what they think will support or sustain current and future developments.

I am excited to see the transformation that’s currently taking place in our beautiful city. Everyone wants to move here!

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Interested in growth and land use issues in Spartanburg? Sign up for UF’s dedicated email list about these topics at upstateforever.org/email.



I saw the pandemic prove how important green spaces and trails are in lowering blood pressure, stress, and cholesterol rates. I believe having more greenspaces, parks, and playgrounds benefits everyone.

— RUTH LITTLEJOHN

Ruth Littlejohn led the effort to refurbish South Converse Street Park in Spartanburg's southside, providing a much-needed recreational area for neighborhood children and families.

How do I contact my legislator, and what do I say?



By Michael Coleman
ENERGY ADVOCATE
mcoleman@upstateforever.org

Dear Ask An Advocate,

*I want to engage with my legislators more, but I don't know where to start, or what to say when I do contact them. Plus, why would they want to hear from someone like me? Sincerely, **Unsure in Union County***

Dear Unsure,

You know your community best, and directly engaging with your elected officials at the SC Statehouse is the most effective way to ensure your concerns on conservation, energy, and other issues are heard. Whether it's urging support for various causes or asking them to oppose projects that put the community or environment at risk, your legislators are there to listen. It's literally their job! Here are some tips to help you get in touch.

How to contact your legislator

Find them: Not sure who represents you? To find your SC legislators, visit scstatehouse.gov/legislatorssearch.php or scan this QR code with your phone or tablet. At the state level, phone numbers and addresses can be found on individual legislators' information pages on the Legislature website.



Email: The most efficient way to direct your concerns to your legislators is via email. The SC Legislature's website allows you to send messages that will be recorded and forwarded to the elected official's office.

Call: Although you may not speak directly with your elected official, a member of his or her staff will document your concerns and pass them along.

Write a Letter: Add a personal touch to the concerns you want to convey by writing and mailing a letter. Bonus: Letters provide a written record of constituents' concerns for the legislator's office. Like phone numbers,

mailing addresses can be found on individual legislators' information pages on the State Legislature website.

Personalize online action center messages

Online action centers and webforms are a quick and easy way to show your support or concern for a local ordinance, bill, or other issue in your community! Many people acting through an online form can show legislators the volume of support — or opposition — for a topic.

However, submissions from these online forms can lack personalization and identical messages can easily be filtered out of the recipient's inbox. If you do use an online form to act — they can be powerful and we even share them with our audience on occasion! — be sure to personalize your message, speak from your individual experience, and consider following up with a phone call.

How to get your point across

Now that you've decided how to contact your legislator, what should you say?

Clearly state your message. Make sure you specifically reference the issue, its location, and important context, such as timeline or the number of people affected.

Keep it brief! Be concise and get to the point. Remember that although it is part of your elected official's job to listen to your concerns, they have many other tasks, meetings, and duties to address.

Humanize your message. Help your legislator understand your concerns from your personal experience. Your legislator is a person too, so speak to their humanity by asking them to imagine themselves in your position. Also, avoid making any personal attacks. Since your legislator's time is valuable, you don't want to waste it on negative accusations that could weaken your message or even cause your legislator to ignore your concern.

Thank your legislator. Your elected official works hard for your community and has limited time, so be sure to thank them for listening and taking action. A little praise and gratitude can go a long way in getting your message heard!

Got a question for one of UF's experienced advocates? Send us an email at info@upstateforever.org.

Upstate Forever advocates at the state and local level on issues related to conservation, water, clean energy, and smart growth. View our 2022 advocacy priorities at upstateforever.org/2022priorities.

Recent UF Land Trust successes:

Calico Vineyard in Greenville County, a 113-acre family-owned vineyard and farm. The protection of Calico Vineyard helps safeguard agriculture, scenic vistas, wildlife habitat, and water quality in this rapidly developing area. Funding from the South Carolina Conservation Bank (SCCB), Greenville Women Giving, and the US EPA under a Section 319 Grant through the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control contributed to the success of this conservation project.

More than 400 acres of hunting and timberland in Greenwood County, known as Bent Ear Farms. This property is rich with flora and fauna, including mature hardwood forests, native plant species, and wildlife. Directly upstream from Lake Greenwood with more than 3 miles of frontage on Turkey Creek, its conservation directly contributes to water quality in the area.

Gobblers Roost, a 1,020-acre timber and hunting property in Laurens and neighboring Newberry County. Funding from the SCCB and Upstate Land Conservation Fund (ULCF) made the conservation of this property possible, ensuring the permanent protection of its natural and scenic values.

A 415-acre network of riparian buffers in Laurens and Newberry Counties near the town of Cross Hill. The Saluda Mitigation Bank protects riparian buffers and wetlands along Mills Creek, Mudlick Creek, and several tributary streams in the Saluda River watershed.

A 38-acre parcel in the Whetstone community of Oconee County, an area of conservation priority due to its proximity to the Chattooga Wild & Scenic River and the Sumter National Forest. This property contains open pasture and nearly half a mile of frontage along Whetstone Creek, a major tributary to the Chattooga. Funding from both the SCCB and Oconee County Conservation Bank (OCCB) ensured the success of this project.

An 88-acre tract on Lawson's Fork Creek in Spartanburg County. Containing wetlands and creek footage, and adjacent to Wofford College's Goodall Environmental Center and the Spartanburg Area Conservancy's Glendale Shoals Preserve, this protected property boasts significant natural, educational, and recreational value. Funding from the ULCF contributed to the protection of this property.

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CORRECTION: *In our last issue, we celebrated the recent added protection of the White Tract, 300 acres in northern Greenville County that expanded Jones Gap State Park. In this article, we neglected to acknowledge the important role previously played by The Nature Conservancy of South Carolina in securing this significant acreage through a multi-year fundraising campaign to raise more than \$2.2 million. We are grateful for the passion and support of our conservation partners and supporters at The Nature Conservancy.*



Calico Vineyard



Bent Ear Farm



Gobblers Roost



Recently protected: This 88-acre tract on Lawson's Fork Creek contains wetlands and creek footage and is adjacent to Wofford College's Goodall Environmental Center and the Spartanburg Area Conservancy's Glendale Shoals Preserve.

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Additionally, two amended easements added more than 470 acres to existing protected lands in Laurens and Anderson Counties. Both properties, originally protected in 2009, now protect additional acreage that includes prime farmland soils, timberland, and wildlife habitat.

Additional projects where Upstate Forever's support was integral to the effort's success (but ultimately UF did not hold the conservation easement) include seven properties in Oconee County, including:

Historic Crawford Mill, approximately 35 acres along Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway 11. The property boasts a significant range of cultural and natural resources including Native American petroglyphs, a bicentennial farm with 20 acres of pasture, and frontage on Fair Play Creek. Nonprofit organization Foothills Farmstead will manage the property as a public park and education center. Upstate Forever supported the Oconee Soil and Water Conservation District on this project, and funding from the SCCB and ULCF ensured its success.

170 acres near the cities of Walhalla and Westminster. A conservation easement on this land helps protect a tributary of the Chauga River, the rural character of the

community, and an expanding footprint of protected properties in the area. Upstate Forever supported the Oconee Soil and Water Conservation District on this project, and funding from the SCCB and OCCB helped make it possible.

A 463-acre collection of properties known as the Oconee Bells Preserves in partnership with Naturaland Trust.

These three tracts are located near Devils Fork State Park and provide critical habitat for the rare Oconee bell plant. These properties will be included in SCDNR's Heritage Preserve program. The protection of this critical habitat was made possible through support from Oconee Forever, the SCCB, and Keowee-Toxaway Habitat Enhancement Program, a cooperative initiative of Duke Energy.

56 agricultural acres within the Oconee Soil & Water Conservation District's designated "Area of Concern" for important soil resources. UF supported the Conservation District on this project, and funding from the SCCB and OCCB ensured this project's success.

Email Scott Park, Glenn Hilliard Director of Land Conservation, at spark@upstateforever.org for more information about protecting your property.

Better engaging the diverse community we serve

In early 2020, Upstate Forever published our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Statement. This statement laid out the steps our board, leadership, and staff would take in coming years to ensure that Upstate Forever's work to protect our region's critical lands, waters, and unique character represented and served the full breadth of the Upstate community. As we chart the course for Upstate Forever's strategic plan that will guide our team's work from 2023-2028, we wanted to share some of the work behind our words. Below are a few updates regarding the goals for diversity, equity and inclusion set forth in 2020. To view a fuller list, visit upstateforever.org/DEI.

Upstate Forever's mission is to protect critical lands, waters, and the unique character of the Upstate region. We envision a future that is healthy, vibrant, and prosperous. To realize that vision, we know it is vitally important and essential to our core values that we engage the diverse community we serve.

Goal: To develop and advance long-lasting, equitable solutions for balanced growth and natural resource protection, our leadership is committed to working intentionally to engage a broader base of Upstate residents in the coming years.

Efforts toward this goal include:

- In 2021, UF co-hosted two virtual events focused on the intersection of racial equity, land policy, and environmental justice. These events resulted in a partnership, led by Sustaining Way, to engage in an effort to pursue EPA environmental justice funding to support Greenville's New Washington Heights Community.
- Actively engaging in a public outreach campaign educating citizens about how having access to clean and reliable drinking water is a basic human right.
- In concert with Soapstone Church Trustees and community leaders, helping to preserve and steward the land comprising Soapstone Baptist Church, schoolhouse, and Soapstone Cemetery — important facets of the Liberia Community, established in Pickens County in 1865 by 600 freed African-American slaves. *See [PAGES 14-15](#) for more info about Soapstone.*
- Collaborated on projects related to energy burden through SC Connected in Crisis, a group working to elevate stories of energy insecurity. This group also worked to mobilize the Public Service Commission to address energy poverty among SC residents to lower energy bills and increase efficiency and access to clean energy.
- Formed a coalition among conservation partners and Indigenous and minority leaders to address toxic drinking water contaminants that often plague communities of color and underserved areas in SC.



On the grounds of Soapstone Baptist Church, the sculpture "A Praying Woman Rising from the Rock," commemorates the matriarchs of the Liberia community, founded in 1865 by freed slaves. UF is honored to play a role in preserving this historic property forever.

- Advocated against and organized response to energy utilities' proposed rate hikes that would have placed inordinate burdens on low-income communities.
- Worked with partners to launch Impact Greenville, a coalition working to shape public policy at the intersection of affordable housing, transit, and land use.
- Actively seeking to protect properties owned by people of color, especially by leveraging available funding to help maintain their working farms forever.

Goal: We will build staff knowledge and capacity related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We will frequently ask ourselves: who is impacted by this work, and how is their voice represented in the conservation and advocacy solutions we seek? We will amplify the stories of underrepresented stakeholders in the conservation movement — especially people of color.

Efforts toward this goal include:

- UF staff participated in a training with Dr. Nika White in 2019, and a virtual DEI training in spring of

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2020. Staff now rotate the responsibility of sharing DEI resources on a monthly basis. A staff-wide discussion of these resources is facilitated at monthly meetings.

- Our Communications team is actively working to amplify voices of diverse leaders in the conservation movement — both at the local level and more broadly.

Goal: Finally, we will take deliberate steps to build authentic community partnerships and cultivate new leaders at all levels of our organization — from our membership to our staff to our board — to ensure that we better represent the community we serve.

Efforts toward this goal include:

- We have made revisions to UF’s recruiting and hiring processes to attract a broader applicant pool and mitigate bias in the hiring process. Our staff is now making edits to the employee handbook to institutionalize these DEI best practices.
- The Board Nominating & Governance Committee is actively seeking recommendations for community members well suited for board service who would also expand board diversity.

This work is ongoing and we want to listen and learn from members of the Upstate community. Please contact lhallow@upstateforever.org with questions and comments.

BLUE RIDGE

\$500,000 - 999,000

Anonymous - In Memory of Marjorie E. Schmidt

PIEDMONT

\$100,000 - \$249,999

Anonymous
Jolley Foundation
Pete & Sally Smith Foundation
Brad Wyche & Diane Smock

GREENBELT

\$50,000 - \$99,999

Mike & Laura Baur
Glenn & Heather Hilliard
Hollingsworth Funds
South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control

VISIONARY

\$25,000-\$49,999

Anonymous
Robert & Martha Erwin
John & Priscilla Hagins
Oly Lombard
Wiley Fork LLC

GUARDIAN

\$10,000-\$24,999

Paul Aughtry
Kathie & Jim Barr
BDV Investments LLC
James & Margaret Bruce
Andrea & Edwin Cooper
The Daniel-Mickel Foundation
Gobblers Roost LLC
Greer CPW
Doug Harper
Reid & Brice Hipp
William Jernigan & Celia Thomas
Emelyn & Neil Jones
Mark Jorgenson
William & Elizabeth Kehl
Kester Family Donor Advised Fund
Mast General Store
MC Timber Properties
Milliken & Company
Michael Nicklas
Donald & Jane Pilzer
Jack & Cindy Plating
Sue Priestner
Stephanie Schmidt
Minor & Hal Shaw
SJWD Water District

Bruce Snyder

Tyger River Foundation

Britt Vergnole

Woodruff-Roebuck Water District

STEWARD

\$5,000 - \$9,999

James & Karen Akerhielm
Anderson Regional Joint Water
George & Betti Bell
Lee & Nancy Bennett
Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina
City of Greer
Jill Cox
Howland & Mary Fran Crosswell
Richard Danner
John Faris
Mason Garrett
Allen & Nicolette Grumbine
Gina Hartness
Frank & Anne Holleman
Wayne & Valerie Hollinger
John R. & Margrite Davis Foundation
Carson & Andrea Johnson
Thomas & Sandra Kester
Erwin & Nancy Maddrey
Dee McCraw
Bobby & Christie Nachman
Carlton & Brenda Owen
Norman & Jo Pulliam
Robert & Christina Rogers
Bruce K Rowland
Steve & Lantie Sandlin
Wade H. Sherard
Jim & Emelia Stephenson
Mark & Starla Taylor
Carter & Dixie Thomasson
Adam & Liz Tyson
David & Louise Uehling
Billy Webster
Charles Wofford & Nancy Thomas

CONSERVATOR

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Sherry & Richard Barrett
Neil Batavia

Lawrence & Sue Brown

Kyle Chudom

Judy Cromwell

Stanley Crowe

Dianne T. Culbertson

Rebecca & Richard Dobbins

Dave Downey

Sam & Meg Erwin

Fujifilm Manufacturing USA

Nathan & Mary Beth Galbreath

Clark & Katie Gallivan

Gally & Fielding Gallivan

Larry & Diane Gluck

Greene, Finney & Horton LLP

Bill & Julie Haas

Roger & Marianna Habisreutinger

Imtiaz & Mary Haque

Bobby & Becky Hartness

Pat & Mary Lou Hartness

Katie & Rob Howell

Mimi Jenko

Mary Etta Johnston

Linda Ketelaar

Edward & Catherine Land

John & Stacy McBride

McKinney Sullivan LLC

Russ & Kyle Miller

Natural Investments LLC

The Nell Newman Foundation

Kathryn & Ben Norwood

Leon & Barbara Patterson

Joseph & Lucy Pulliam

Terry Robertson

Rita Rao

Mike & Susan Riordan

Scansource

William & Jean Schmidt

Herman Senter & Thelma Miller

Derek Smith

Thomas & Nancy Taylor

Jack & Jane Turner

John & Janne Vann

Steven & Teri Lukin Zahn

Membership in the Wyche Society is open to all who support Upstate Forever annually at a level of \$2,500 or above. Wyche Society members enjoy special events, field trips, and recognition in Upstate Forever materials. To join, email Aldon Knight, Director of Development and Community Relations, at aknight@upstateforever.org.

SUSTAINER (\$1,000 - \$2,499)

The Airey Law Firm Ltd. Co.
 Jay Alden & Mary Jane Simpson
 Dennis & Judith Allen
 Robert Ashcraft
 Jay & Kelley Barnhardt
 Ben Barnhill
 John & Laura Bauknight
 Dana Beach
 Robert & Lisa Bezzeg
 John Bissell & Jane Chambers
 Charles Blumenfield
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 Sandra Glatzau Brown
 Larry Bowden
 Alan & Janie Butcher
 Brant & Judy Bynum
 Campbell Young Leaders
 Timothy & Nan Cleveland
 Dan & Sally Coenen
 Jerry & Celia Cogdell
 The Community Foundation of
 Western North Carolina
 Conservation Voters of South
 Carolina

Ernest W. Cooler
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 Laura & Chris Cousins
 Thomas Moore Craig
 Crow & Bulman Engineering
 Jeannie Croxton
 James W. Davis
 Eric & Sara Dellinger
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 Dick & Dayna Elliott
 Ernest J & Doris H. Howard
 Foundation
 William B Evins
 William & Beth Fuller
 Carol & Kyle Gilley
 Lowrie & Margaret Glasgow
 Edwin & Peggy Good
 Leroy & Carrie Gordon
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